



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 168

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022

No. 48

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 17, 2022.

I hereby appoint the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 10, 2022, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

MINORITY HEALTH DISPARITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Madam Speaker, today I rise with a great sense of gratitude. Gratitude for the opportunity to serve the people's House and gratitude for passing my first standalone bill, H.R. 189, the John Lewis National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Endowment Revitalization Act. It passed the House and Senate, and on a bipartisan basis to

boot. The bill is on its way to the President's desk, and on Friday, President Joe Biden will sign it in a White House ceremony that this kid from the harbor area of Los Angeles never dreamed was possible.

This is a full circle moment for me, one that made me tear up last night as I sat to reflect how I got here and how my passion on the issue of disparities in health took shape.

In 1998 as a young college student, I had an opportunity to work as an intern in the Clinton White House. I worked in the Office of Public Liaison doing African-American outreach under Ben Johnson and Minyon Moore. It was during my work there that I learned about the issue of racial health disparities. At the time, United States Surgeon General David Satcher highlighted the issue, and it became a passion of mine.

A year later I would continue my work on the issue and in the healthcare space at the NAACP with Hilary Shelton. Ben Johnson and Hilary Shelton mentored and inspired me. They encouraged me to keep up my work on the issue.

Today, as a Member of Congress, the issue of racial health disparities and the need for us to close the healthcare gap is among my top priorities. In that light, during the 116th Congress when I was in my second term, an opportunity arose to work with organizations like the Association of Minority Health Professions Schools and others on a bill to help fund research on health disparities at schools of excellence.

I remember approaching our friend, the late John Lewis, about the bill. He encouraged me to fight and to get it across the finish line, and he agreed to become an original cosponsor.

In this Congress, the 117th Congress, I renamed the bill in honor of my friend, the late John Lewis. H.R. 189 is now the John Lewis National Institute on Minority Health and Health Dispari-

ties Research Endowment Revitalization Act.

I thank the gentleman from Georgia, Representative BUDDY CARTER, for being a co-lead on the bill. The Senate bill, S. 320, was introduced and championed by Senators BILL CASSIDY and BRIAN SCHATZ. I am grateful for their work to get this across the finish line and Senator CASSIDY for being gracious.

H.R. 189 will, once again, allow for current and former NIMHD or Health Resources & Services Administration Centers of Excellence to receive research endowment funding, money that is critical in the fight to reduce minority health disparities.

The research endowment program at the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities provides funding to the endowments of academic institutions across the country. Schools like Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science will qualify; Morehouse School of Medicine, the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine, Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, Xavier University of Louisiana College of Pharmacy, and many more will be eligible to receive funding under this bill.

The goals of the program include promoting minority health and health disparities research capacity and infrastructure, increasing the diversity and strength of the scientific workforce, and enhancing the recruitment and retention of individuals from health disparity populations that are underrepresented in the scientific workforce.

On Friday, 24 years after getting my start in politics at the White House, I will be back there again, this time as a Member of Congress to see H.R. 189 become law and move us one step closer to ending the disparities in public health facing communities of color.

For that I am grateful.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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